Crisis Assistance
Helping Out On The Streets

White Bird Clinic
Eugene, Oregon

MEDIA GUIDE 2020

Mental Health First Response
and Mobile Crisis Intervention
since 1989

WHAT IS CAHOOTS?

31 years ago the City of Eugene, Oregon developed an innovative community-based public safety system to provide mental health first response for crises involving mental illness, homelessness, and addiction. White Bird Clinic launched CAHOOTS (Crisis Assistance Helping Out On The Streets) as a community policing initiative in 1989.

The CAHOOTS model has been in the spotlight recently as our nation struggles to re-imagine public safety. The program mobilizes two-person teams consisting of a medic (a nurse, paramedic, or EMT) and a crisis worker who has substantial training and experience in the mental health field. The CAHOOTS teams deal with a wide range of mental health related crises, including conflict resolution, welfare checks, substance abuse, suicide threats, and more, relying on trauma-informed de-escalation and harm reduction techniques. CAHOOTS staff are not law enforcement officers and do not carry weapons; their training and experience are the tools they use to ensure a non-violent resolution of crisis situations. They also handle non-emergent medical issues, avoiding costly ambulance transport and emergency room treatment.

A November 2016 study published in the American Journal of Preventative Medicine estimated that 20% to 50% of fatal encounters with law enforcement involved an individual with a mental illness. The CAHOOTS model demonstrates that these fatal encounters are not inevitable. Last year, out of a total of roughly 24,000 CAHOOTS calls, police backup was requested only 150 times.

The cost savings are considerable. The CAHOOTS program budget is about $2.1 million annually, while the combined annual budgets for the Eugene and Springfield police departments are $90 million. In 2017, the CAHOOTS teams answered 17% of the Eugene Police Department's overall call volume. The program saves the city of Eugene an estimated $8.5 million in public safety spending annually.

CAHOOTS calls come to Eugene's 911 system or the police non-emergency number. Dispatchers are trained to recognize non-violent situations with a behavioral health component, and route those calls to CAHOOTS. A team will respond, assess the situation and provide immediate stabilization in case of urgent medical need or psychological crisis, assessment, information, referral, advocacy and, when warranted, transportation to the next step in treatment.

White Bird's CAHOOTS provides consulting and strategic guidance to communities across the nation that are seeking to replicate CAHOOTS' model.

MEDIA CONTACT: If you would like more information about CAHOOTS, have an interview request, or would like to speak with us, please contact:

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QUICK FACTS ABOUT CAHOOTS:

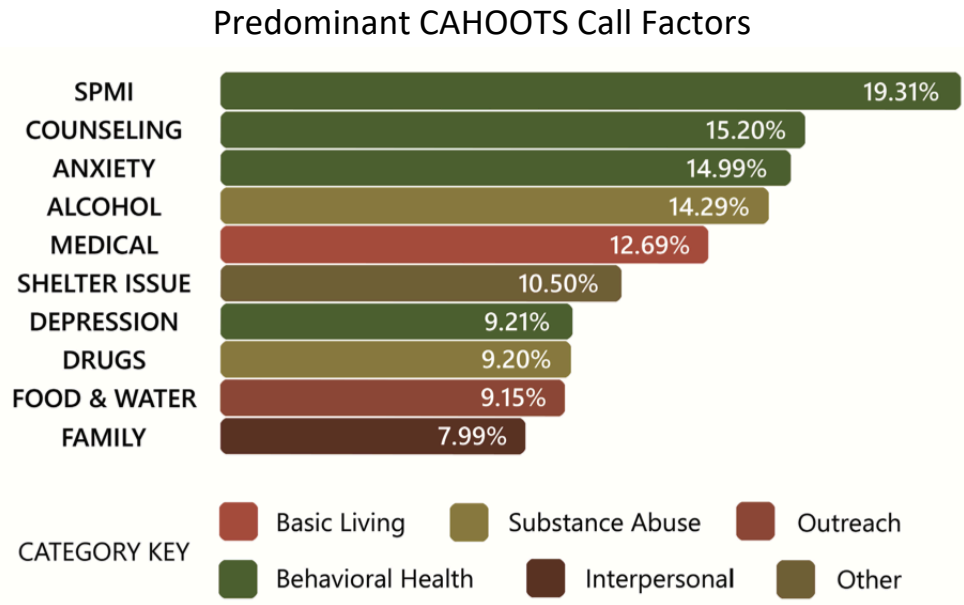
31 YEARS OF CRISIS RESPONSE IN EUGENE AND SPRINGFIELD

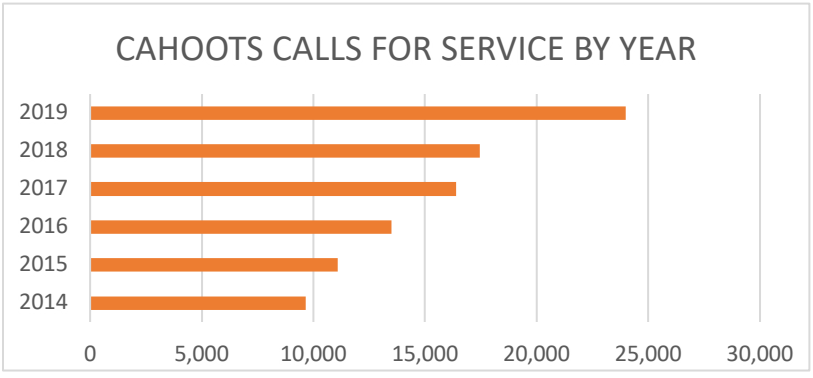
- *In 1989, the City of Eugene diversified public safety spending by creating a human services partnership with White Bird Clinic's CAHOOTS program.*
- *CAHOOTS is part of Eugene and Springfield's emergency response system and is dispatched by EPD & SPD.*
- *CAHOOTS supports Eugene and Springfield Police Departments by responding to crisis situations, other situations needing de-escalation, behavioral and mental health concerns, intoxication calls, welfare checks, and even death notices.*
- *Last year CAHOOTS handled more than 24,000 calls, about 20% of the calls dispatched by 911. CAHOOTS teams called for police backup 250 times.*
- *CAHOOTS teams are comprised of a medic (either a nurse or EMT) and a crisis worker experienced in behavioral health.*
- *All team members complete over 500 hours of training that emphasizes de-escalation and crisis intervention to resolve situations where a social service response is more appropriate than a police response.*
- *CAHOOTS workers are not trained to be police and they do not have the same powers as police. CAHOOTS staff is unarmed.*
- *CAHOOTS receives funding from Eugene and Springfield city governments, a coordinated care organization, and donors.*
- *CAHOOTS has saved an estimated average of $8.M on public safety and $14M for ambulance/emergency room treatment annually.*

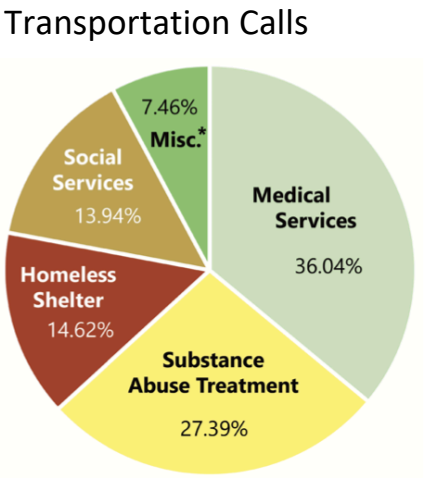
CAHOOTS RESPONSE DATA 2014–2019

We respond to a diverse range of calls, including non-emergency medical care, counseling for people in crisis, welfare checks and requests for transportation to social services, substance abuse treatment facilities, and medical care providers. More than 60% of our clients are homeless, and 30% live with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI).

In 2019, CAHOOTS responded to 24,000 calls for assistance, and of these only 150 calls required backup from the police department.







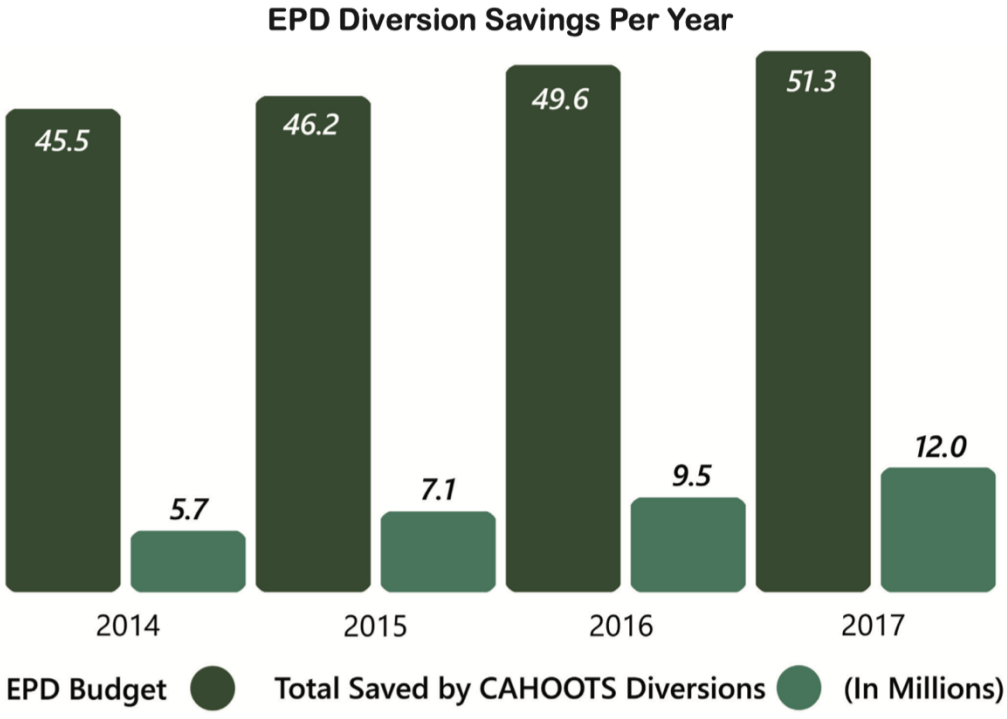
MOBILE CRISIS INTERVENTION

Saves Money for Police & Emergency Management Services

CAHOOTS was not designed to replace policing; CAHOOTS team members are not law enforcement officers and do not carry weapons. Instead, CAHOOTS offers a service that responds to non-violent crises so police don't have to. The most common types of calls diverted to CAHOOTS from the police are welfare checks (32.5% of all CAHOOTS calls), public assistance (66.3%), and transportation to services (34.8%). Some of these crisis responses involve more than one call type.

By diverting crisis calls that can be more appropriately handled by a CAHOOTS team, the CAHOOTS program takes a substantial load off of Eugene Police Department (EPD) and saves taxpayers an average of $8.5 million every year.

CAHOOTS' efforts focus on a set of problem areas that otherwise would take up a lot of police time and attention. Police training also doesn't provide adequate preparation for dealing with mental health, homelessness and other front-line social interventions. The CAHOOTS model provides a comprehensive solution that allows the police department to focus on law enforcement issues while ensuring that appropriately trained responders are dispatched for each unique situation.



The EPD quotes $800 per police response. Using the number of calls that would otherwise be handled by police, including suicide risk, homicide risk, self harm, intoxication, rage, welfare, and transport, CAHOOTS has saved the EPD an average of $8.5 million each year from 2014-2017.*

**www.eugene-or.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10635*

CAHOOTS EMS SAVINGS

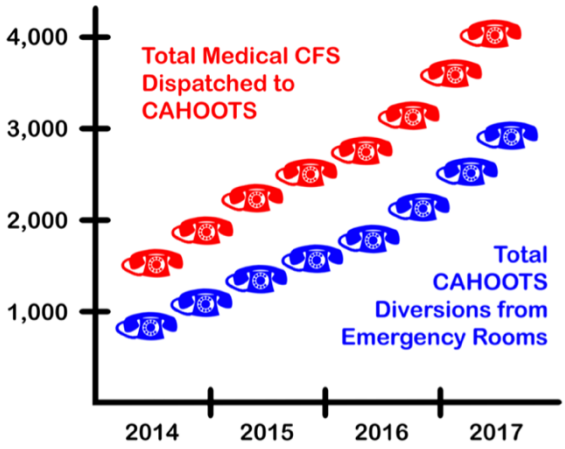
CAHOOTS is also able to attend to non-emergency medical calls that would have otherwise been responded to by Emergency Medical Services (EMS). CAHOOTS can respond to suicide or self-harm calls, calls for basic medical treatment such as wound cleaning, and provide assistance for clients who are presenting as disoriented or delusional with an alert and oriented level of less than 4, or who have other symptoms of psychosis. Treating these symptoms in the field prevents infections, which are common among homeless populations (as many have no way of keeping wounds clean). This in turn also keeps patients out of the emergency room in the long term.

In 2019,
The CAHOOTS
program saved roughly
$14 Million
in emergency medical
systems costs,
including ambulance
transport and emergency room
services

EMERGENCY ROOM DIVERSION

CAHOOTS teams divert a large number of medical calls for service from Fire/EMS and/or the emergency room, transporting or treating according to need.

- Primary Assessment
- Wound Care
- Medication Management
- Substance Use Disorders
- Suicidal Ideation/Risk Assessment
- Failure to Thrive
- Isolation and loneliness
- Lift Assists
- Chronic Utilizers/Frequent Flyers



REPLICATING THE CAHOOTS MODEL

Mobile Crisis Program Consultations & Guidance

White Bird Clinic's CAHOOTS mobile crisis response is being recognized as an important and innovative public/private partnership delivering crisis and community health first response effectively and at significant cost savings. Communities across the country are requesting training and strategic guidance in order to replicate the CAHOOTS model.

In November 2018, the Wall Street Journal published *When Mental Health Experts, Not Police, Are the First Responders*, an article that showcased CAHOOTS as an innovative model for reducing the risk of violent civilian/police encounters.

White Bird has been assisting other communities in the Pacific Northwest for years; publication of the WSJ article put CAHOOTS in the national spotlight for the first time.

CAHOOTS focuses exclusively on meeting the medical and mental health needs of the community, making it both more economical and more effective than traditional models involving agencies with a much larger scope of responsibility. The CAHOOTS model ensures that medical and behavioral health care are integrated from the onset of intervention and treatment, adding to the efficacy and economy of the model.

The CAHOOTS model cannot be replicated with a cookie-cutter approach; the program's efficacy is dependent on a community's existing human services network. There are three underlying factors that support our success in Eugene, Oregon:

1) A robust human services network.
2) Trust of the population we serve, based on our 50-year history in the community.
3) A community culture of care and compassion supporting this kind of response to struggling community members.

Currently, CAHOOTS is working closely with the communities of Olympia, WA and Denver, CO on implementing a mobile crisis response program.

In addition, we are poised to assist with the initial development of programs in:

- Western Lane County, OR
- Roseburg, OR
- Coos Bay, OR
- San Francisco, CA
- Albuquerque, NM
- Indianapolis, IN
- Hartford, CN
- New York, NY

CAHOOTS offers a variety of consulting services that can be tailored to address the specific needs of a community. Interested parties can travel to Eugene to observe CAHOOTS in the field, or CAHOOTS teams can travel to other locales to conduct field training with local patrol, fire/EMS, or dispatch personnel.

Other services include development of training materials and operating manuals for community mobile crisis response programs, policy development, training in classroom setting, advising on best practices and service delivery, assistance with hiring and interviewing, other technical advisory/assistance and ongoing program support.

ABOUT WHITE BIRD CLINIC

For more than fifty years, White Bird Clinic has helped individuals to gain control of their social, emotional and physical well-being through direct service, education and community. The clinic is a Federally Qualified Health Center committed to providing accessible, patient-centered human services. White Bird opened in 1969 as a grassroots free clinic organized by student activists and concerned practitioners, offering a crisis hotline and medical care for counter-culture youth in Eugene. Throughout fifty years of service, White Bird has continuously grown in response to community need.

White Bird's program model capitalizes on the wide variety of services offered, allowing it to provide comprehensive integrated care by treating the whole person. The clinic operates ten programs, including: a medical clinic, 24-hour crisis service, counseling, outpatient drug and alcohol treatment, a human services information and referral center, homeless case management, CAHOOTS mobile crisis intervention, dental clinic, OHP and benefits enrollment, and mental health outreach in schools. When low income, unhoused community members have an unmet need, White Bird adds or expands services in response. Recent accomplishments include opening a new crisis center that offers walk-in services and a 24/7 crisis hotline, expanding the main medical clinic's hours and adding a street medicine service, and building a new dental clinic that increases capacity by 70%. An in-home end of life counseling service was launched in addition to a care coordination team that supports patients with complex needs.

For more information about White Bird Clinic:
https://whitebirdclinic.org/

For links to articles and other media about the CAHOOTS program:
https://whitebirdclinic.org/services/cahoots/cahoots-in-the-news/

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